

# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING

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ZONING DIVISION

April 7, 2005

## CHAIRMAN AND PLANNING COMMISSIONERS

City of Long Beach  
California

**SUBJECT:** Hearing to Consider an Amendment to the Downtown Long Beach Planned Development District to Adjust the Density and Building Height Standards in a Portion of the East Village Mixed Use District of PD-30 (Council District 2)

**LOCATION:** Broadway Corridor of the East Village Subarea of Downtown Planned Development District (PD-30)

**APPLICANTS:** Jim Najah  
27068 La Paz Road, #452  
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656

Greg Carpenter  
Planning Bureau Manager  
City of Long Beach  
333 W. Ocean Blvd.  
Long Beach, CA 90802

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Certify Negative Declaration 11-05; and
2. Recommend the City Council Adopt an Ordinance to Amend PD-30 relative to Residential Density and Building Height in the East Village Mixed Use Subarea.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

1. The proposed zoning code amendment is designed to provide opportunities for appropriate-scaled infill development in the East Village Arts District;
2. The proposed zoning code amendment is consistent with the *East Village Arts District Guide for Development*;
3. The proposed zoning code amendment will contribute to creating a complete, vibrant, and human-scaled urban neighborhood;
4. The proposed zoning code amendment is consistent with the goals, objectives and provisions of the General Plan; and
5. The proposed zoning code amendment has received wide public support from local residents, businesses and neighborhood organizations in the East Village Arts District.

The Downtown Long Beach Planned Development District (PD-30) was adopted prior to, and amended in its entirety, in 2000 to guide future development in downtown Long Beach to achieve a vital multi-purpose activity center consisting of eight districts. The East Village Mixed Use District of PD-30 was formed in response to a study completed in October 1996 entitled the *East Village Arts District Guide for Development* (the “Guide”). The purpose of the study was to identify comprehensive strategies to create a viable arts district that functions as a distinct activity center and neighborhood in the City of Long Beach. At the time the study was completed, the Zoning Regulations allowed for the development of mid- to high-rise construction (8 – 20 stories in height) with commensurate ability to achieve densities in excess of 100 units per acre.

In 1996, when the residential market was relatively weak, the *Guide* found that the allowance for mid- to high-rise construction could not be supported by the market and unrealistically drove up land prices and impeded real development, but that new residential construction of three to four story buildings, at a maximum, would satisfy future demand while realistically promoting redevelopment. Therefore, PD-30 was amended to restrict height to 3 stories and 38 feet in much of the East Village Mixed Use District, including the project area. Figure 1 shows the current height limits for the East Village Mixed Use District.

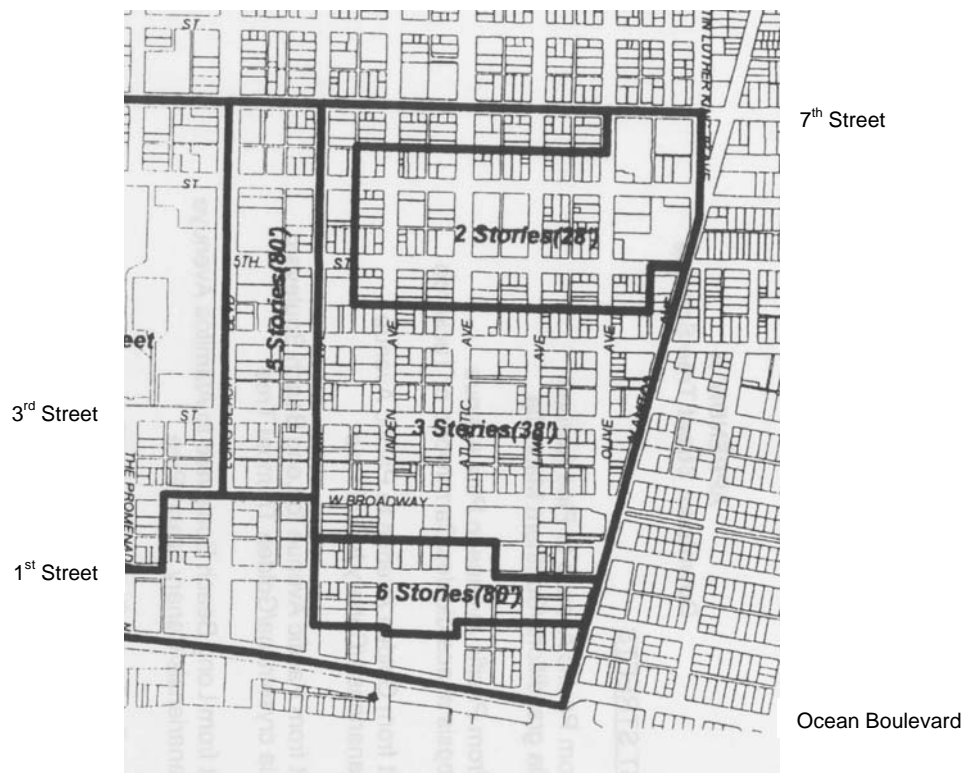


Figure 2: Portion of *Existing* Height District Map

The project area (Broadway corridor) consists of all properties south of E. Maple Way (mid block between Broadway and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street) and north of E. Alta Way (mid block between 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Broadway) between Elm Avenue and Alamitos Avenue, as well as all properties located south of E. Alta Way and north of 1<sup>st</sup> Street between Alamitos Avenue and Broadway Court (mid block between Atlantic Avenue and Lime Avenue). Please see attached map.

In June 2004, Jim Najah (co-applicant), applied for a Conceptual Site Plan Review (SPR) of a proposed four-story, mixed-use development on a parking lot site at 125 Linden Avenue immediately south of the Broadlind Hotel (145 Linden Avenue). Staff felt that the proposed scale and intensity of development was appropriate because of the project's location in the greater downtown Long Beach area and the scale of the adjacent development, including the Broadlind building (3 – 4 stories) and Lafayette complex (up to 9 stories). However, the proposed development requires zoning code amendments to PD-30 to allow an increased height of four stories and 60 feet and an increased density of 75 dwelling units per acre. Rather than provide for a zoning code amendment for only one site, staff found it appropriate to consider the application of the proposed amendments to the length of the Broadway corridor to achieve consistency in development. Therefore, the City is considered a co-applicant.

The applicants (Mr. Najah and the City) held community meetings on November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> to solicit public comments regarding amending height and density restrictions for the Broadway corridor to allow the project at 125 Linden to proceed as well as similar projects in the future on the various underdeveloped sites along Broadway identified as development opportunities by the *Guide*. The overall reaction of the community was favorable, as evidenced by the attached public correspondence generated following the meetings.

The formal request by the applicants is to amend the height and density restrictions of the Broadway corridor of the East Village Mixed Use District as shown in the proposed Height District Map (Figure 2) and portion of Table 2 of PD-30 below. The increased density may only be achieved with development four stories in height and will be based on net lot area.

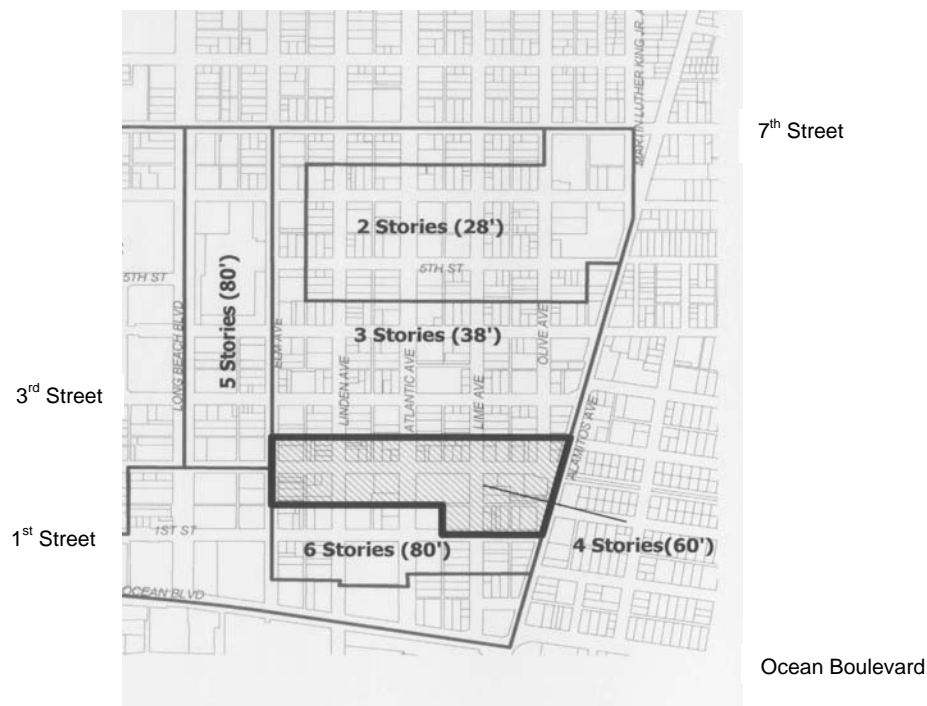


Figure 2: Portion of *Proposed* Height District Map

<b>Portion of TABLE 2 - Downtown Planned Development Area - Permitted Residential Density</b>				
Sub-Area	Lot Area of 0-4000 sf	Lot Area of 4001-7,500 sf	Lot Area of 7501-15,000 sf	Lot Area of 15,001 sf or larger
East Village Mixed Use	1 unit	1 unit per 1,400 sf (31 units/ acre)	1 unit per 1,200 sf (36 units/ acre) or 1 unit per 800 sf (54 units/acre)*	1 unit per 900 sf (48 units/acre) or 1 unit per 580 sf (75 units/acre)*

\* Higher density allowed only for developments at least four stories in height. See attached "Height District" Map.

### **CURRENT ACTION REQUESTED**

The applicants are requesting a zoning code amendment. In response to this request, the Planning Commission shall be required to make positive findings of fact prescribed in Division I (Zone Changes and Zoning Regulation Amendments) of Chapter 21.25 of the Municipal Code and recommend that the City Council approve the zoning regulation amendments. These findings are attached for reference and summarized below.

#### **A. THE PROPOSED CHANGE WILL NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER, LIVABILITY OR APPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;**

The proposed amendment will allow for the redevelopment of underutilized properties along the Broadway Corridor in the East Village Arts District. The proposed change is not a significant departure from the existing zoning regulations and thus will not adversely affect the character, livability or appropriate development of the surrounding area. This fact is reinforced by the original recommendation of the *Guide* to allow development of three to four stories in height in this portion of the East Village Arts District.

The proposed change is also consistent with the greater downtown Long Beach environment where the historic development pattern consists of intense residential and commercial development. The proposed change will increase the intensity of in-fill development and thus help create a more vibrant pedestrian-oriented activity center. All new development is required to provide adequate on-site parking and thus, the intensity allowed by this proposed change will not adversely affect the livability of existing developments that rely on curbside parking.

Through the Site Plan Review process and application of urban design guidelines in PD-30, future development affected by this zoning code amendment will positively contribute to the unique identity of this district and achieve the intended effect of creating a vibrant, human-scaled urban neighborhood.

**B. THE PROPOSED CHANGE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PROVISIONS OF THE GENERAL PLAN; AND**

The proposed increase in height and density is consistent with building regulations that allow developers to utilize Type V (wood-frame) construction up to four stories in height and thus promotes the continued investment in housing development in the downtown area by providing density and height limitations that are more conducive to cost-efficient land-use development. Therefore, the proposed change is consistent with the following goals and policies of the General Plan:

**Housing Element**

- Encourage new residential development along transit corridors, in the downtown, and close to employment, transportation, and activity centers; and encourage infill and mixed-use developments in designated districts. (Policy 2.5, Page V-10)

**Land Use Element**

- New Housing Construction – Long Beach encourages the development of 24,000 new housing units through the Year 2000, with emphasis on filling the gaps which exist or are anticipated in certain sectors of the City's housing market. In the immediate future, the emphasis should be on for-sale housing for first-time homebuyers and upon upscale residential development in and around the downtown area. (Page 17)
- Managed Growth – In order to preserve quiet residential neighborhoods, and to accommodate travel between residential and commercial areas, new housing must be concentrated around Downtown and the other activity nodes of the City, and along some of the principal streets which connect them. (Page 21)
- East Village Land Use Policies (Page 125)
  - Careful infill of both smaller scale and larger scale developments must occur.
  - Densities overall should be moderate to high, and moderate to upscale housing and attractive to urban professionals.

**Transportation Element**

- Continue to support mixed-use developments in the downtown (Policy 22, page 133)

Furthermore, zoning is "consistent" with the Land Use element when and where the land use permitted by the zoning fulfills the intent of the land use district in which the proposed zone change is located (Land Use Element, Page 266). The project area is located in Land Use District #7 (Mixed Uses), which is intended for large, vital activity centers where a combination of land uses are desirable, including retail, offices, medical facilities, higher density residences, visitor-serving facilities, personal and professional services and recreational facilities. The proposed increased density and height does not conflict with the intent of LUD #7.

**C. IF THE PROPOSED CHANGE IS A REZONING OF AN EXISTING MOBILE HOME PARK, THAT THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 21.25.109 HAVE BEEN OR WILL BE FULLY MET.**

The proposed change is not a rezoning of an existing mobile home park.

## **PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE**

As per the requirements of Division III – Noticing Requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and per the requirements of Section 2.23.080 of the Long Beach Municipal Code, a legal notice was sent to all owners of real property as shown on the latest equalized assessment roll within three-hundred feet of the project area on March 2, 2005. Notices were also sent to the Second District Councilperson, City libraries, and local community groups that have requested such notice. Notices were also posted at City Hall.

Community meetings were held on November 8<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup> 2004 with the East Village Business Association and Lafayette Homeowner's Association respectively. The proposed zoning code amendment received wide support during both meetings. Comments submitted to the City in response to these meetings are attached for reference.

While the public notice described specific densities based on gross lot area, the community meetings and project reflect a density based on net lot area. Thus, the proposed zoning code amendment is to increase the density of four-story development from 48 dwelling units per acre to 75 dwelling units per acre, based on net lot area.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

In accordance with the Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), ND 11-05 has been prepared for the proposed project. The Negative Declaration found that the proposed zoning code amendment will have a less than significant impact to the environment. Therefore, no mitigation measures are required.

## **IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION**

1. Certify Negative Declaration 11-05; and
2. Recommend the City Council Adopt an Ordinance to Amend PD-30 relative to Residential Density and Building Height in the East Village Mixed Use Subarea.

Respectfully submitted,

GREG CARPENTER  
PLANNING BUREAU MANAGER

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
JOE RECKER  
PLANNER

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
CAROLYNE BIHN  
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Attachments      1. Negative Declaration 27-04  
                         2. Except from the *East Village Arts District Guide for Development*  
                         3. Height Districts Map  
                         4. Public Correspondence